

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated April 21, 2006. Claims 1, 3, 4 and 7-11 were pending, with claims 2, 5 and 6 having previously been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 4 and 7-11 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, and new claims 12-37 have been added. Accordingly, claims 12-37 are now pending, with claims 12, 21 and 29 being in independent form.

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 7-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable by U.S. Patent No. 6,892,317 to Sampath in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,370,341 to Haines.

Applicant has carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submits that new independent claims 12, 21 and 29 are patentable over the cited art, for at least the following reasons.

This application relates to an improved approach for offering services to an image communication terminal (for example, a photocopier, a facsimile device, a printing device, a multi-function device, etc.) which can be subjected to many instances in which maintenance, repair, replacement of consumables, etc., is required. Although some systems have been proposed which monitor a status of an image communication terminal and transmit an e-mail to a service center when maintenance, repair, or replacement of consumables is required, such systems do not additionally notify the manager of the image communication terminal of the status of the image communication terminal requiring service attention.

Applicant devised an improved approach wherein an e-mail is transmitted from an image communication terminal to a service center, with identification information and status

information of the image communication terminal and an e-mail address of a manager computer being included in the e-mail, a message is generated in a home page of the manager computer, utilizing the information from the e-mail from the image communication terminal, and a second e-mail is transmitted to the e-mail address of the manager computer, the second e-mail including a URL (uniform resource locator) of the home page of the manager computer, allowing viewing of the message by utilizing the URL of the home page included in the second e-mail. Each of independent claims 12, 21 and 29 addresses these features, as well as additional features.

Sampath, as understood by Applicant, proposes a system for monitoring electronic devices operating in a network environment, predicting and diagnosing failures in the devices. In the system proposed by Sampath, the electronic devices are connected to a server which analyzes data received from the electronic systems to determine an appropriate action to take, and if necessary, submits an action request to an appropriate service and/or supplier or to an autonomous repair agent, to initiate repair or corrective action.

Sampath states vaguely that results of failure prediction, diagnosis and/or remediation can be communicated via e-mail or web page.

For example, Sampath, column 3, lines 1-5, which is cited in the Office Action, states as follows:

This invention separately provides systems and methods for the presentation of the results of the failure prediction, diagnosis and/or remediation, locally or, remotely, such as, for example, on a computer user interface, via e-mail, a paging service, a cellular phone, a web page, or the like.

Further, Sampath, column 10, lines 47-63, which is also cited in the Office Action, states as follows:

In step S48, the repair planning step determined that a customer/system administrator repair event is recommended. Specifically, in step S48, the identification or instructions for

the customer repair, the machine identification and the repair identification are forwarded to the customer site. In step S50, the active notification step forwards instructions/information to the customer based on a predefined criteria. In particular, a customer can agree to perform certain repairs/maintenance on-site. If the repair event falls into one of these predefined categories, the active notification step S50 determines the necessary information to forward to the customer to effect the repair/maintenance. Next, in step S52, the repair action is forwarded to the system administrator at the customer site, via, for example, a web page. Alternatively, or additionally, in step S54, the repair action is forwarded to the customer at the customer site, via, for example, a web page.

However, Applicant does not find teaching or suggestion in Sampath that (1) an e-mail, which includes identification information and status information of an image communication terminal and an e-mail address of a manager computer, is transmitted from the image communication terminal to a service center, (2) a message is generated in a home page of the manager computer, utilizing the information from the e-mail from the image communication terminal, and (3) a second e-mail is transmitted to the e-mail address of the manager computer, the second e-mail including a URL (uniform resource locator) of the home page of the manager computer, allowing viewing of the message by utilizing the URL of the home page included in the second e-mail, as provided by the claimed invention of each of independent claims 12, 21 and 29.

Haines, as understood by Applicant, proposes techniques for managing consumables of an image forming device. Haines was cited in the Office Action as purportedly disclosing introducing information related to new-product guide information.

Applicant simply does not find disclosure or suggestion in the cited art, however, that (1) an e-mail, which includes identification information and status information of an image communication terminal and an e-mail address of a manager computer, is transmitted from the image communication terminal to a service center, (2) a message is generated in a home page of the manager computer, utilizing the information from the e-mail from the image communication

terminal, and (3) a second e-mail is transmitted to the e-mail address of the manager computer, the second e-mail including a URL (uniform resource locator) of the home page of the manager computer, allowing viewing of the message by utilizing the URL of the home page included in the second e-mail, as provided by the claimed invention of each of independent claims 12, 21 and 29.

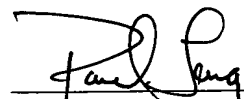
Accordingly, for at least the above-stated reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 12, 21 and 29, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentable over the cited art.

In view of the amendments to the claims and remarks hereinabove, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant earnestly solicits the allowance of the application.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition. The Patent Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that are required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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